

US MARINE CORPS



“THE MARINE CORPS WILL ALWAYS DO WHAT’S BEST FOR OUR PEOPLE ON THE FRONT LINES. TODAY, TOMORROW, AND INTO THE FUTURE, WE ARE TAKING COGNOS WITH US INTO BATTLE.”

—JARRET S. KUHF AHL, FINANCIAL SYSTEMS DEVELOPER, THE US MARINE CORPS

Since inception in 1775, the Marine Corps had grown both institutionally and organizationally to include over 180,000 active and 40,000 reserve Marines. The Programs and Resources Department is the principal staff agency responsible to the Commandant of the Marine Corps for developing and defending the Marine Corps financial requirements, policies, and programs.

It is the mandate of the P&R Department to advise and assist the program sponsor, HQMC staff agencies, and Marine Corps Field Comptrollers in all matters relating to accounting, related information systems, and program execution. It is their mission to be the center of financial management excellence and quality in the review, analysis, and reporting of financial execution. To help them do this, they chose Cognos.

Industry:

- Government

Geography:

- United States

Information Needs:

- A common enterprise IT environment with a Web-based portal and an enterprise shared data environment
- Fast financial information for management, outside agencies, and troops
- Flexible reporting and analysis that can adapt quickly to changing requirements

Platform:

- Homegrown mainframe accounting system
- Oracle 9i
- Other proprietary and transactional systems

Solution:

- Cognos ReportNet
- Cognos PowerPlay
- Cognos Visualizer

Users:

- 3,600+

Benefits:

- A BI platform that touches all disparate data sources to provide a single version of the truth
- Information in minutes rather than days
- Reports and insight on areas never before possible
- Cost savings in processing power, lower resource requirements, and less reliance on paper
- Web-based system that delivers information across the globe

CHALLENGES FACED

The Marine Corps faced the same problems as most large organizations. They had disparate systems that weren't integrated to share information and data. Their primary data source was a homegrown mainframe accounting system that was extremely sophisticated, but limited in terms of reporting and data accessibility. They needed a platform that could extract data from this system, and consolidate information from 65 other systems, including their Oracle database.

Once the information was centrally accessible, they needed a sophisticated reporting and analysis platform that was tailored to the unique needs of their key audiences, including Marines, Comptrollers, DFAS, DoN, and OSD offices.

They needed a Web-based system to help eliminate the high cost of maintaining client-based applications. And, with over 3,000 users in every corner of the world, the system had to be high performing, scalable, and readily available at all times.

STRATEGY FOLLOWED

Use of Cognos software at the Marine Corps evolved over a number of years. “We started with a very small deployment of Cognos Impromptu for standard reporting,” says Jarret S. Kuhfahl, Financial Systems Developer, US Marine Corps.

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THE NEXT LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE™

“We very quickly realized the reporting power it gave us, and the fact that it was easy to use meant it fit our requirement perfectly. In terms of capabilities, we felt Cognos was the only choice and didn’t consider any other solutions.”

The heavy use of Cognos began two years later with reporting on manpower usage in the Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS), and for financial and reporting against their Standard Accounting Budget Reporting System (SABRS). With the introduction of Cognos PowerPlay and Cognos Visualizer, the Marine Corps began to build a complete end-to-end performance management system. With PowerPlay they could deeply analyze and track data to the lowest level of detail. With Visualizer they could present high-level information in dashboards, providing the at-a-glance information that the Marines needed.

Most recently, the Marine Corps implemented Cognos ReportNet for a truly Web-based system. In doing so, they launched a system that provides facts in a timely and accurate manner to over 3,600 users across the globe. The system is updated daily, is readily available 24/7, and runs over 1,000 reports each day.

The success of the Marines Corps, however, hasn’t been solely based on finding the right product—they have also benefited from the people who stand behind it. “One of the keys to our success has been the value that Cognos Training Services has brought to the process,” says Kuhfahl. “Although we have always found Cognos products easy to use, Cognos training allows us to get a large number of users up and productive in the least amount of time possible. The Cognos trainers are also uniquely positioned to show us the best practices for the software, further maximizing our return on investment.”

BENEFITS REALIZED

With Cognos, the US Marine Corps has the right information at their fingertips. They now have deep and broad insight across the full spectrum of performance management metrics. With basic reports, transaction level details, department level analysis, accurate numbers for contingency operations, compelling dashboards, and metrics on their key performance indicators, the Marines have a single version of the truth across the organization.

With return on investment always being the watchword, Kuhfahl feels Cognos has been invaluable. “With Cognos we have a system that is adaptable, flexible, inexpensive to maintain, and easily deployable. We are power users and

regularly throw curves at the system and Cognos always performs. Most importantly, the system is fast. We can now provide information in minutes as opposed to days or weeks and with initiatives like the war on terrorism, timely information is a powerful weapon. As Marines we need to be ready anytime, anywhere, and Cognos helps us do just that.”

The US Marine Corps has recovered costs in a number of ways with Cognos. By implementing a system that allows rapid turnaround of reports by non-technical users, the Marines can keep expensive resources, like IT programmers, focused on strategic initiatives rather than maintenance of the system. And since reports are now done off Cognos rather than the mainframe, their processing costs are substantially reduced. Cognos has also helped the department move towards paperless processes, substantially reducing costs in postage, paper, faxing, and more.

“Business Intelligence are truly the two best words I could use to describe Cognos products,” says Kuhfahl. “Today the Marines are faster, leaner, and more responsive as an expeditionary force; we needed a system to be the same. With Cognos we know we are going into battle with the right information.”

ABOUT COGNOS

Cognos, the world leader in business intelligence and performance management solutions, provides world-class enterprise planning and BI software and services to help companies plan, understand, and manage financial and operational performance.

Cognos brings together technology, analytical applications, best practices, and a broad network of partners to give customers a complete performance system. The Cognos performance system is an open and adaptive solution that leverages an organization’s ERP, packaged applications, and database investments. It gives customers the ability to answer the questions — How are we doing? Why are we on or off track? What should we do about it? — and enables them to understand and monitor current performance while planning future business strategies.

Cognos serves more than 23,000 customers in more than 135 countries, and its top 100 enterprise customers consistently outperform market indexes. Cognos performance management solutions and services are also available from more than 3,000 worldwide partners and resellers. For more information, visit the Cognos Web site at <http://www.cognos.com>.



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